

The Fine Art of Stretching

Have you noticed these signs of stiffness? You move slower getting out of the car or bed. You ache when you bend over to tie your shoes. You can no longer sit cross-legged. If so, it's time to improve your flexibility.

Flexibility refers to how well your joints move through their range of motion. You can develop more joint flexibility by doing slow, gentle stretches held in a static position for several seconds to a minute. Stretching is not strenuous, but it requires focus and consistency.



top fitness

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4 Fun Ways to Exercise

If you have to drag yourself to exercise, you're missing the point. Sometimes people fail to persist with exercise because they choose activities that bore them. Here are some ways to raise the fun factor:

1. **Find a good friend** who will be committed to exercising with you, someone you look forward to seeing and who likes to talk and laugh. The buddy system is a proven way to stay motivated. Your exercise time together will pass quickly.
2. **Machine workouts at home** are convenient but may become tedious. Set up your machine in front of a DVD player and watch a TV series. You'll look forward to viewing the show's progress at your next workout.
3. **Vary your exercise routine** by following new walking or jogging routes or using a mix of different cardio machines at the gym or at home. Join a completely different exercise class, such as a pool workout; the right group can be fun and energizing.
4. **Try changing your perspective.** For example, you may grow tired of strength training, so sometimes you skip your workout. Solution? Create multiple strength training routines, and vary them each week.

While you may not always find exercise fun, it sure feels good when you're done.

best bits



March is Nutrition Month.

This month marks the 40th anniversary of National Nutrition Month. The No. 1 nutrition goal for everyone? Eat more fruits and vegetables. Keep them handy and add them to every snack and meal. Aim for 2 cups of fruits and 2½ cups of vegetables every day. Juice qualifies provided it's 100% vegetable or fruit, but whole foods are preferable.



■ **Got a minute?** Try relaxation breathing: Close your eyes and count down slowly from 10 to 0. With each number, take a complete breath, inhaling and exhaling. For example, breathe in deeply, saying "10" to yourself; breathe out slowly. When you reach 0, you should feel calmer.

■ **People metabolize alcohol differently.** In general, the effect of 1 drink in most women is roughly equivalent to 2 drinks in men. But effects vary based on size, age and health. Even 1 drink can be harmful for some, so don't drink and drive.

“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.”
— Winston Churchill

This Edition ➔ Snoring: No Joke
➔ Souper Soup
➔ Men: 9 Reasons to Go to the Doctor

Spot Stress Symptoms. Turn to page 3. ➔





Men: 9 Reasons to Go to the Doctor

What can you do now to safeguard your health and live longer?

- 1. Live longer with good care.** Two decades ago, women lived 7 years longer on average than men. But with more men getting regular medical care, the gap has fallen to 5 years.
- 2. Build a relationship with a regular health care provider.** You need one to contact should you become sick or injured. The alternative is often relying on costly emergency room services. You will get more personalized care if your provider knows your health history.
- 3. Get regular preventive exams.** Depending on your individual needs, regular provider visits may detect disorders earlier when they're easier to treat. You can also seek advice about healthy lifestyle changes.
- 4. Monitor your blood pressure.** Have it checked at least every 2 years starting at age 20.
- 5. Know your cholesterol levels.** Have a blood test at least every 5 years after age 20.
- 6. Have a diabetes test.** Begin screening at age 45, or earlier if you have risk factors.
- 7. Get cancer screening.** Your provider can check your skin, testicles, prostate, colon, rectum and other organs for cancer.
- 8. Ask about mental health.** Do not ignore problems with nervousness, depression or trouble sleeping. An evaluation can identify the causes and possible solutions.
- 9. Update your vaccines.** Don't fall behind on immunizations for preventable diseases such as influenza, tetanus, hepatitis and whooping cough.

Many aspects of your health are under your control.

Eat right, exercise and get regular checkups. A strong, healthy body can mean a longer, more enjoyable life.



Snoring: No Joke

Snoring is annoying, especially if you have to listen to it. We tend to dismiss that noisy, heavy breathing during sleep as simply a nuisance. But if your snoring gets louder and habitual, you could be at risk for health problems.

Snoring happens when the flow of air through your mouth and nose is blocked. The narrower your airway becomes, the greater the vibration and the louder the snoring. Basic causes:

- Relaxation of the throat muscles, resulting from deep sleep, alcohol or sedative use, or normal aging.
- Bulky throat tissue from excess weight.
- Physical abnormalities of the nose or throat.
- Inflammation of the nose and/or throat due to respiratory infections or allergies.

If you are a chronic, heavy snorer, you are at increased risk for apnea – brief cessation of breathing multiple times during sleep. About 50% of people who snore loudly have obstructive sleep apnea.

Apnea is serious. The long, frequent interruptions of breathing can strain your heart and reduce the quality of your sleep. Consult your provider if you develop excessive daytime sleepiness or frequent headaches or fatigue upon waking.

To control mild or occasional snoring: Lose weight, sleep on your side, avoid alcohol before bedtime and avoid sedating drugs such as sleeping pills or antihistamines. Also get treatment for allergies.



Just Say 'No' to Negativity

Do you work with someone who loves to complain or undermine other coworkers? Free yourself from the negativity of others and stay productive with these strategies.

Acknowledge the problem, but don't fuel the fire. If someone is complaining, recognize their feelings by saying something such as "I understand how hard that must be for you," or "I'm sorry that happened." However, keep the conversation brief, or steer it toward more positive topics.

Use "I" statements. Tell the person that his or her words bother you and that you'd like to stop the discussion, but avoid placing blame.

Start every sentence with "I" instead of "you." For example you can say, "I appreciate your advice, but I can handle this on my own."

Walk away. Sometimes the best way to deal with negative people is simply to ignore them. Find a project to focus on, take a walk, or put in earphones (if allowed) to escape the negative behavior. If you withdraw your interest and don't respond, the person may stop acting negatively around you.

Get help. If negative behavior makes it difficult for you or your coworkers to be productive and get things done, talk to your supervisor. Always follow company policy.



Can stress affect your health? Yes – it can produce many adverse emotional, behavioral and physical symptoms. The checklist below includes some of the major effects of stress.

- ☐ I become irritable, even angry, over minor incidents.
- ☐ I have trouble concentrating.
- ☐ I have trouble relaxing or sleeping.
- ☐ I lack energy for favorite activities.
- ☐ I tend to either overeat or have little appetite.
- ☐ I neglect exercise and other healthful habits.
- ☐ I have more headaches, neck or back pain or arthritis flare-ups.
- ☐ I have more colds or other infections.
- ☐ I have increased blood pressure, cholesterol and body fat.
- ☐ I have frequent digestive upsets (abdominal pain, constipation, irritable bowel episodes).

If you often experience even a few of these symptoms, try 2 things:

1. Identify what stresses you. Spend a few minutes each day noting the situations or people who upset you. Awareness is the first step to controlling your reactions to stress and coping better.
2. Make sound nutrition and exercise daily priorities, no matter what's going on in your life. The stronger you are physically, the less stress can impact your health.



Cooking Tip: For loads of flavor without adding salt to your cooking, experiment with herbs, citrus juices and vinegar. Instead of dousing salt on your vegetables, finish with fresh herbs – asparagus with tarragon, peas and carrots with thyme, or roasted potato wedges with rosemary and a sprinkle of vinegar. Add orange, lime or lemon juice to soups, salads, chicken and seafood. *Deliciously different!*

nutrition watch

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Whether it's a filling appetizer or a hearty meal, you can enjoy soup with healthful ingredients. **Here are tips for making and buying better soup:**

Making soup is easy. Most soups start with liquid, vegetables and herbs. Adding legumes, chicken, meatballs, brown rice or whole-grain noodles turns soup into a meal. To reduce sodium, start with plain water instead of canned broth or bouillon.

▶▶ **Tip:** Only 6% of our sodium intake comes from salt added during or after cooking, while 77% comes from packaged foods such as soup broth.

Soup shopping? Choose a variety labeled “no added salt,” or look for soups with no more than 360 mg of sodium per cup (140 mg or less is considered low sodium). ▶▶ **Note:** The claim “sodium reduced” means the product has 25% less sodium than the original version. If the original had 1,000 mg of sodium per serving, the reformulated one still has 750 mg of sodium – that's pretty salty soup.

One soup caution: Restaurant and store-bought soups can have 750 to 1,000 mg of sodium per serving. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend you limit sodium to fewer than 2,300 mg a day. Lower that to 1,500 mg daily if you're: age 51 or older; if you have high blood pressure or other chronic conditions; or if you're African American.



Souper Easy Vegetable Stock

This soup starter is flavorful, fresh, low in sodium, and worth the effort.

EASY | RECIPE

From Personal Best®

- 1 tbsp **olive oil**
- 4 large **carrots** (8-10 in), chopped
- 4 **celery** stalks (8-10 in), chopped
- 3 medium **onions**, chopped
- 1 large **fennel bulb**, chopped
- 1 large **apple**, quartered
- 12 cups **water**
- 1-2 tsp **black peppercorns**
- 8-10 flat-leaf **parsley sprigs**
- 3-4 **thyme sprigs**



1. Heat oil in a large soup pot over medium temp. Add vegetables and apple; sauté 25 minutes, until vegetables are tender and slightly browned, stirring often.
2. Stir in water, scraping pot to loosen cooked bits. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat and simmer until mixture reduces by half, about 2 hours.
4. Strain stock through a sieve over a bowl and discard solids.
5. Cool completely. Refrigerate covered for up to a week, or freeze.

Don't discard the cooked vegetables. Although they are no longer needed for the broth, they are flavorful and healthful. Suggestion: Puree them with 1-2 cups of your new broth and enjoy a creamy vegetable soup.

Note: After straining, the broth has minimal nutrients.

MAKES 6 cups. Per serving:

19 calories | 0.0g protein | 2g total fat | .3g sat fat | 1.6g mono fat | .2g poly fat
| 0.0mg cholesterol | 0.0g carbs | 0.0g sugar | 0.0g fiber | 78mg sodium

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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The American College of Sports Medicine recommends stretching at least 3 days a week. **Primarily target stretches that aid your back, side, hip and leg muscles (with your health care provider's OK) and follow these guidelines:**



Important:
Breathe normally while stretching.
Do not hold your breath.

Warm-up: Stretch after warming up the muscles and joints for 5 to 10 minutes, or after your regular exercise.

Duration: Hold each stretch for at least 10 seconds, working up to 30 seconds.

Repetitions: Perform each stretch 3 to 5 times.

Technique: Stretch slowly and smoothly only to the point of mild sensation. Focus on the muscle being stretched; limit movement elsewhere and don't bounce.

The length of time you devote to a stretching workout will depend on your individual needs and the number of specific stretches you perform for each muscle.

Unused Drug Disposal: What You Need to Know

What do you do with your expired prescriptions or over-the-counter drugs? Here are some safe options:

- Contact your municipal household trash and recycling service about a medicine take-back program.
- Ask your local pharmacy about available disposal programs.
- Check disposemy meds.org for a local drug "take-back day," and drop off your unused drugs at the specified location.

The FDA recommends the following if no take-back programs are available in your area:

1. Gather expired drugs, kitty litter or coffee grounds and a sealable

plastic baggie.

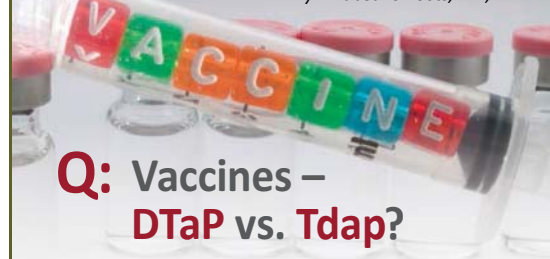
2. Place solid drugs (pills) in the baggie; seal and crush.
3. Add liquid drugs.
4. Add coffee grounds or kitty litter.
5. Seal the baggie and toss in the trash.
6. Remove the prescription label or scratch out information to protect your identity. Recycle empty medicine containers if permitted in your area.

To learn more, enter "Disposal of Unused Medicines: What You Should Know" in the search field at www.fda.gov.



expert advice

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP



Q: Vaccines – DTaP vs. Tdap?

A: Both vaccines protect against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. All of these diseases can lead to serious problems. Untreated tetanus from puncture wounds can lead to muscle spasms or even death. Diphtheria is very contagious and can cause breathing problems. Pertussis can trigger severe coughing spells known as whooping cough. Decreased immunity has led to an epidemic of pertussis in the U.S.

DTaP. Designed for children under age 7, the vaccine consists of a series of 5 doses started at 2 months of age.

Tdap. This vaccine contains smaller amounts of the diphtheria and pertussis components, making it appropriate for older children, teens and adults. It's generally recommended once for people between ages 11 and 64. Getting the vaccine helps defeat the whooping cough epidemic, so ask your provider if you need one.

Shots aren't just kid stuff: Protect yourself and those around you at work and at home. Adults need to keep their vaccinations current, too.